



Case study

Motivations for first-time and repeat backpackers in Shanghai

Jane Lu Hsu*, Terry Chun-Ting Wang, Phoebe Yu-Hsin Huang

Department of Marketing, National Chung Hsing University, 250 Kuo Kuang Road, Taichung 40227, Taiwan



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ABSTRACT

This study examines the differences in motivations for backpackers who made first-time and repeat backpacking trips in Shanghai. The backpackers were personally interviewed in Shanghai and 183 valid samples were used in the analyses. The average stay in Shanghai for the first-time, second-time, and third-time (or more) backpackers was 6.44 days, 7.50 days, and 9.42 days, respectively. Although the repeat backpackers stayed in Shanghai longer than the first-time backpackers, the former were less motivated. The findings in this study revealed that the push factors were stronger than the pull factors for backpackers. Suggestions to attract repeat backpackers are provided in this study.

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1. Introduction

The concept of backpacking originates from the Grand Tour, which were formalized trips taken within the European theater during the 17th and 18th centuries (Loker-Murphy & Pearce, 1995). Contemporary backpacking stems from young tourists participating in small, self-arranged travel groups (Theuns, 1992). Visser (2004) states that backpackers are a sub-set of international budget travelers, and despite their thriftiness, backpackers benefit the visited economy (Mohsin & Ryan, 2003).

Some motivations for backpacking include the opportunities for learning (Pearce & Foster, 2007), the experience of the local lifestyle (Maoz, 2007), and the chances to meet other travelers (Oliveira-Brochado & Gameiro, 2013). Backpackers travel with an independent and flexible trip arrangement in mind (Pearce, 1990), and are different from other tourists in that backpackers are less motivated for travel luxuries (Larsen, Øgaard, & Brun, 2011). To obtain the unique travel experiences associated with backpacking, backpackers are inclined to avoid mainstream tourists (Loker-Murphy & Pearce, 1995). Chitty, Ward, and Chua (2007) conclude that backpackers often stay longer and visit more locations than mainstream tourists.

Backpackers have long been considered distinct from the business traveler or family vacationer. Pearce and Foster (2007) claim that backpackers as a group should not be considered homogeneous, for heterogeneity indeed exists within specific backpacker segments (Ateljevic &

Doorne, 2005; Hecht & Martin, 2006; Maoz, 2007; Uriely, Yonay, & Simchai, 2002). Larsen et al. (2011) argue that since the literature provides little backpacker information in regard to nationality, age and gender, life-cycle status, and trip planning, this limits the discussion on a proper representation for this group of travelers. In the same vein, Larsen et al. (2011) compare travel motivators for backpackers with those of mainstream travelers, but find that the motivations for the first-time and repeat backpackers alone have not been thoroughly discussed in the literature.

Backpackers travel to explore on a limited budget, yet with such limited travel funds, what would motivate a backpacker to visit a particular location? Further, what would motivate a backpacker to visit that location again? Would different motivations exist for a backpacker's first trip than for his or her second backpacking trip there?

In light of those questions, the objective of this study is to reveal the differences in motivations for first-time and repeat backpackers to backpack in Shanghai. By extension, this study also will reveal the scope of heterogeneity that exists within the backpacker population on account of the prevailing motivations for visiting a place once, twice, and multiple times; this study will also fill the gap within the relevant literature. The findings in this study potentially could benefit tourism professionals by providing insight into the behaviors that might serve as key indicators for targeting and attracting backpackers to various locations.

Backpacking in China has been made popular as a result of recent international events, namely the Beijing Olympics in 2008 and the Shanghai Expo in 2010. For sure, Shanghai has a history of attracting foreign travelers; the long list of foreign governments who have occupied the area in the past is indicative of that. Shanghai possesses a modern infrastructure and solid service industry that allow the foreign traveler to move about the city in an independent and effortless

* Corresponding author at: Department of Marketing, Rm 764, National Chung Hsing University, 250 Kuo Kuang Road, Taichung 40227, Taiwan. Tel.: +886 4 2285 6376.

E-mail address: jl@dragon.nchu.edu.tw (J.L. Hsu).

manner. Because of these attributes, the City of Shanghai was chosen for this study with the goal of examining the motivations for both first-time and repeat backpacking trips to this city.

China's tourism industry as a whole has experienced rapid development since the 1990s, yet despite this, the literature speaks exclusively to its domestic market but limited to its foreign market (Cai & Knutson, 1998; Wang & Qu, 2004; Wu, Zhu, & Xu, 2000). International tourism in China has not been thoroughly examined, and very little has been discussed as it pertains to backpacking. Although backpacking may not be a dominant sector within China, the importance of this type of travel within this country cannot be overemphasized.

2. Motivational factors in backpacking

Dann (1977) suggests a two-tier scheme of motivational factors called push and pull dimensions. The push dimensions refer to the internal forces, such as the social–psychological motivators that drive an individual to travel. The pull dimensions refer to the external forces, otherwise known as a destination's outward features, specific attractions or unique attributes that entice one to visit. Both of these factors are believed to be in effect at the same time (Crompton, 1979; Uysal & Jurowski, 1994).

Crompton (1979) uses in-depth interviews to explore adults' vacation decisions and through that obtains nine motivational factors. Seven of which are push factors: escape from a perceived mundane environment, exploration and evaluation of self, relaxation, prestige, regression, enhancement of kinship relationships, and facilitation of social interaction. The other two are pull factors: novelty and education. Crompton (1979) states these factors should not be considered mutually exclusive. Uysal and Jurowski (1994) examine the push and pull factors using regression analysis, and suggest that these factors be examined simultaneously due to the fact that they are inherently related. Baloglu and Uysal (1996) use canonical correlation analysis to highlight the relationship between the push and pull factors.

Kao, Patterson, Scott, and Li (2008) apply the push and pull theory to examine the motivations of Taiwanese for visiting Australia and the relevant satisfaction gained. As it turns out, the primary push factor was to 'travel around the world,' while the main pull factor was to 'appreciate the sunshine and scenery.' In their research, Llewellyn-Smith and McCabe (2008) examine some students' motivations for becoming international exchange students at an Australian university. The results showed that a 'desire to travel' and an 'opportunity for fun and excitement' were both important push factors for these students. Their leading pull factor, which was similar to that of Taiwanese, was 'to enjoy the Australian sea, sun, and surf.'

Mohsin and Ryan (2003) point out that 'broaden knowledge about the world' and 'attraction of natural sites' are both strong motivations for traveling in Australia's Northern Territory. In general, Correia, do Valle, and Moço (2007a) conclude that when traveling, the important push factors are 'knowledge,' 'leisure,' and 'socialization,' while 'facilities,' 'core attractions,' and 'landscape features' are all important pull factors.

Josiam, Smeaton, and Clements (1999) mention that motivations, such as those listed and measured in the provided push and pull dimension tables, influence the final travel destinations. Kim, Jogaratnam, and Noh (2006) point out that travel motivation is an important dynamic when deciding where and even whether to go on a trip. Reichel, Fuchs, and Uriely (2009) conclude that motivations are strongly linked to the ultimate backpacking destinations.

As mentioned, motivational factors are significantly relevant when backpackers make travel plans; these budget travelers are driven by a plurality of internal and external (i.e. push and pull) forces that assist in these plans. The motivation to visit a specific location can vary for both first-time and repeat backpackers, and, as this study will show, it is these distinct push and pull dimensions that are instrumental in the backpackers' travel decisions. This study could be valuable to tourism

professionals in developing effective marketing strategies for this heterogeneous group of travelers.

3. Research methods

The surveys were administered by in-person interviews in Shanghai, China, and the replies were used to reveal the motivations for both first-time and repeat backpackers to backpack in Shanghai. A trial survey consisting of 30 participants was conducted before proceeding with the formal questionnaire in order to discover any necessary changes. The suggestions offered by the professionals, practitioners, and respondents who participated in the trial survey helped to optimize the questionnaire's items.

These push and pull motivation statements in the questionnaire were selected from the relevant literature (Baloglu & Uysal, 1996; Beard & Ragheb, 1983; Correia, do Valle, & Moço, 2007b; Kim et al., 2006; Mohsin & Ryan, 2003; Pyo, Mihalik, & Uysal, 1989; Ryan & Glendon, 1998). The questionnaire contained 22 push and 17 pull motivation items and were presented using the six-point Likert scales ranging from extremely disagree to extremely agree.

The questionnaire was modified as the discussions developed among and the suggestions were presented from the trial survey's participants. A number of threshold questions were added to the beginning of the questionnaire in order to screen for suitable respondents. Primarily, a respondent had to be a foreigner who was on budget-travel in Shanghai and was not associated with a tour arranged through an agency; foreigners who lived and worked in China were not eligible.

For the most part, the questionnaires were administered at various hostels within Shanghai by trained interviewers who approached the potential respondents in a hostel's public area; at that time, the interviewers explained the purpose and details of the study. If necessary, the interviewers explained the meanings of the items as well, but did not interfere with the way a question was answered. The questionnaire took around 20 to 30 min, and a stipend of approximately \$3U.S. was

Table 1
Push statements and their mean scores.

Statements	Mean score ^a
1. The reason I am traveling at this time is to get away from my busy everyday life.	3.78
2. The reason I am traveling at this time is to relax.	4.28
3. The reason I am traveling at this time is to be alone.	2.48
4. The reason I am traveling at this time is to get away from the responsibilities of daily life.	3.23
5. The reason I am traveling at this time is to refresh myself.	4.50
6. The reason I am traveling at this time is to clear my mind.	4.18
7. The reason I am traveling at this time is to look for thrills or excitement.	4.36
8. The reason I am traveling at this time is to experience a foreign lifestyle.	4.56
9. The reason I am traveling at this time is to fulfill my curiosity about new things.	4.91
10. The reason I am traveling at this time is to enhance relationships with friends/families.	3.83
11. The reason I am traveling at this time is to visit a place recommended by friends.	3.45
12. The reason I am traveling at this time is to meet new people.	4.41
13. The reason I am traveling at this time is to go somewhere I have never visited.	4.83
14. The reason I am traveling at this time is to go sightseeing.	4.63
15. The reason I am traveling at this time is to seek stimulating experiences.	4.69
16. The reason I am traveling at this time is to challenge myself.	4.14
17. The reason I am traveling at this time is to improve my travel skills.	4.18
18. The reason I am traveling at this time is to expand my interests.	4.27
19. The reason I am traveling at this time is to do something meaningful.	3.98
20. The reason I am traveling at this time is to increase my knowledge.	4.55
21. The reason I am traveling at this time is to visit big cities.	3.80
22. The reason I am traveling at this time is to fulfill a long-time desire.	4.00

^a Statements are measured using six-point Likert scales ranging from *extremely disagree* (one point) to *extremely agree* (six points).

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